

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP

BULLETINS 2019

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Jan)

As there was no History Group meeting in December I thought I would recap on the past year. Our programme included talks on water mills, orchards and the experiences of a wartime evacuee; walks in the furthest east and south parts of the parish; a visit to the Devon Heritage Centre and a major exhibition to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. Work on cataloguing items given or copied has continued in the History Room.

Thanks to the hard work of David Charles Halberton History Group now has a new website up and running. Besides historical information and pictures of the Halberton area it can be checked for the Group's 2019 programme and news of our recent events and visits – searching on “Halberton History Group” should take you to it.

We have just received a 1956 photograph of a shop on the High Street with the name F. Dymond, General Stores. We believe Fred Dymond took over the shop after the Land family and before it became a Co-op (later wool shop, then ‘violin shop’). We would love to see any other photographs of shops of which there were at least seven in Halberton, one in Ash Thomas and another in Brithem Bottom. We also received, from Australia no less, a sketch map of Halberton Higher Town in the 1940s with many of the houses marked and names of the people living there. All done from memory by a man who emigrated many years ago.

Also in January, we were visited by a lady from America and her cousin whose grandmothers were sisters born in Halberton in the 1880s, one emigrating in 1905 and the other staying in England. We were able to arrange for them to visit two of the houses where their family had lived and are very grateful to the owners who made them welcome and showed them around.

For 2019 the History Group meetings will take place on the 4th Thursday of the month to avoid clashes with other groups. Our next meeting will be on 28th February when Hugh Mellor will talk on “Devon's Country Houses in the 21st century”. The AGM takes place on 28th March. Following the business part of the meeting John Leach will tell us about “Halberton in Doomsday”. Everyone is welcome to attend any of our meetings.

Joy Wooding

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Mar)

Our January meeting took the form of a members' evening with several short presentations. Ron Venner updated us with recent developments on the Roman Site - there will be more field walking to take place in the autumn. Alison Thomas told us about Mrs. Izat and her life before she came to Halberton. Dave Charles rounded off the evening with the story of Canon Girdlestone, Halberton Vicar from 1862 to 1872 who campaigned vigorously for better conditions and pay for farm labourers.

In February the Group very much enjoyed a talk by Hugh Meller, previously Historic Buildings curator of the National Trust and now author of an award winning book "The Country Houses of Devon". He took us on a fascinating tour of many of the properties covered in his book, some familiar and many less well-known. We were given a brief appraisal of each and of their owners, accompanied by photographs, most of which he had taken personally. Four new members joined the History Group on the evening.

Below is our programme for the next few months. Everyone is welcome to come along to any of our meetings and visits.

April 25th

'A Halberton Miscellany - interesting things you probably didn't know about Halberton'. Speaker Mike Sampson. 7.30pm, Jubilee Room, Halberton Village Hall.

May 23rd

Visit to St Andrew's Church, Halberton led by Oliver Nicholson from the Tiverton Archaeological Society. Starts at 7pm.

June 27th

Uplowman Leat 'Walk and Talk'. Meet at Uplowman Cross at 7pm.

July 25th

Visit to Leonard Farm - details to follow.

Joy Wooding

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (May)

At our AGM in March officers were re-elected as before with one exception. Ron Venner stood down from the post of Vice-Chair. His place was taken by Dave Charles but Ron will remain on the committee.

After the business part we were treated to a very informative talk by John Leach about Halberton, given as "Halsbretone", at the time the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086. He estimates that the population then would have been just over three hundred. There were two mills which suggests that the Pond and Millstream were already in existence. His handouts were extremely helpful in explaining the terms used, the levels of hierarchy and the way justice was administered.

In April Tiverton Historian Mike Sampson gave us "A Halberton Miscellany". This was an eclectic collection of snippets about Halberton which he had come across during the course of his research. Topics varied from flint tools found dating from 250,000 BC, cock fighting in 1654, to a fine of 15/- for driving a locomotive at a speed exceeding 2 mph in 1912. One interesting topic, perhaps inviting further research, was a visit in 1937 by an Indian Maharajah to Townsend House where several Indian teenagers who were at school in England were staying.

Our research into the Twose Business in Halberton is beginning to take shape. Our contact in Australia has sent another plan, this one showing the layout of the works, down to details such as the position of the work benches, and a long list of the people he remembers working there in the 1940s. If any of our readers can provide any information at all about the business we would like to hear from you.

Our June meeting on the 27th will be a walk starting at Uplowman Cross at 7 pm, exploring the course of the Uplowman Leat. July 25th will be another outside meeting when we shall find out about the history of one of our ancient farms. Telephone 820496 or email for details.

Joy Wooding Tel. 820325 email: historygroup@halberton.org

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Jul)

In May the Group visited St. Andrew's Church, Halberton, and was treated to a very informative evening courtesy of historian Oliver Nicholson. We started, just as it began to drizzle, with a walk around the outside where various points of the structure were pointed out. We then continued inside with observation of the carvings and explanation of what the interior would have looked like originally. Many thanks to Heather for opening up the church and serving us with tea & coffee.

It was very timely that the Group had only just received an enquiry about Rev. Newcomb, vicar of Halberton from 1845 to 1862 and Bryan Hubble pointed out two plaques on the walls near the alter referring to him and his family. One in memory of Rev. Newcomb and one, poignantly, of his daughter, Caroline, who died in Paris aged only 19.

In June Mike Britton led a few members and three guests to explore the course of a leat which runs from near Uplowman House. It is taken off the stream which starts by Chimney Down and eventually joins the Spratford Stream between Sampford and Willand. The several offshoots fed farms and Sampford Corn Mill. We walked a mile or so of the part nearest Uplowman where Mike showed us the location of various sluices and told us how until fairly recently all the properties which benefitted from the water were obliged to keep it running. Once a year farmers got together clearing and repairing the whole course.

There will be no meeting in August. Our autumn programme starts on 26th September when Douglas Rice will give a talk entitled "Renegado - John Were, Halberton Hero". This follows on from his recent book launch and signing at St. Andrews.

24th October – Talk "Riot and Dissent" by Devon Heritage Archivist Irene Andrews.

28th November – Show & Tell Evening.

Joy Wooding Tel. 820325 email: historygroup@halberton.org

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Sept)

Due to the summer break there are no Group meetings to mention but members of the Group have still been very busy. Two members visited a lady who spent her childhood in Halberton. Another visit was to the owner of documents relating to one of the outlying listed buildings and the surrounding area. Our assistance had been requested in sorting through these to decide where they should be kept. Following on from our exhibition last November we have been given papers with more information about the casualties of WW1. We have had posters at local shows requesting information about farm implements made at the Twose works in Halberton which we hope will provide more details for our research into the business.

Coming up :

October 24th – Irene Andrews will give a talk “Riot and Dissent”

November 28th - Show and Tell Evening

Do you own something – anything - with a history attached to it? Would you be prepared to bring it along and talk about it for a few minutes at our “Show and Tell” and social evening on November 28th? That’s not as daunting as it might seem. Everyone has something in their house that will be suitable, be it ancient or modern – a book, an ornament, a picture, a coin, a photograph, a kitchen implement, something they were bequeathed, a diary, a piece of embroidery, a tool, a piece of bric-a-brac; you name it – the list is endless. We would like volunteers to “show” their object and then “tell” the story of how they came by it and why the object is important to them. So – can YOU tell us the history of something that you own? We’d love to hear from you as soon as possible so that we can plan the programme for the evening.

Email : historygroup@halberton.org Tel : 01884 820496

HALBERTON HISTORY GROUP (Nov)

Following on from the launch of his book "Renegado, John Were, Truly a Hero" at St. Andrew's Church the author, Douglas Rice, gave us a most interesting talk in September. He outlined the Civil War career of John Were whose family home was Halberton Court to which he returned several times during the campaign-ing. There is a plaque for him and his wife Elizabeth on the floor of the Church Tower.

September was a very busy month when over the space of two days we received three separate foreign visitors. First was a lady from Missouri, USA, who spent a whole day visiting the local places where her 3xgreat grandparents, Isaac & Elizabeth Tozer, had lived. With some advanced research we were able to take her to two of those actual houses and show her the site of two other places which no longer exist. She was thrilled to be able to stand in rooms where they had actually been living. Many thanks to the four owners who made us most welcome and to Barrie for meeting her at the Church. I am sure she is returning home impressed by the friendliness of the Devonians she met. Having worked on the railway line here, the family emigrated to the USA to work on the American Railroad as it was driven west.

The next day we were visited by a gentleman from Australia whose ancestors, William Brice & Maria Cousins, were married at Halberton Church in 1838. However, they did not remain in the parish for long, moving on to Tiverton. Immediately after this came a visitor from New Zealand, who had been drawn to attend Mr. Rice's talk as he is tracing his own Were ancestors. George Were & Mary Ann Webb were married at Halberton in 1849 and then went to London where George was a cheese monger. They also kept the family farm, Lower Curham, going at Halberton, no doubt producing the cheese to sell in their shop. Their two sons emigrated to New Zealand to run a dairy farm and butchers.

In October Irene Andrews, Archivist at the Devon Heritage Centre, gave a talk on Riot & Dissent when she told us about local events during the Civil War and the Reformation, sharing some lesser known sources from the National Archives.